

***INTERNATIONAL SECURITY UPDATE***  
***October 16 - 23, 2014***

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**1. [Obama, Hagel Offer Canada Assistance after Attacks](#) (10-23-2014)**

By Cheryl Pellerin  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23, 2014 – President Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel have offered condolences, assistance and continuing close partnership to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the people of Canada and the family and friends of two soldiers killed in attacks there this week.

In remarks yesterday, Harper praised Warrant Officer Patrice Vincent, who was killed in a hit-and-run attack “by an ISIL-inspired terrorist,” and Cpl. Nathan Cirillo of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, who was “murdered in cold blood” as he provided a ceremonial Honor Guard at Canada’s National War Memorial.

Both assailants were killed.

Yesterday, Obama and Hagel both made statements about the attacks.

“I had a chance to talk with Prime Minister Harper this afternoon,” Obama said during a White House press conference on the U.S. response to the West Africa Ebola crisis. “Obviously, the situation there is tragic ... and I expressed on behalf of the American people our condolences to the family and to the Canadian people as a whole.”

## **Statement by Chuck Hagel**

In his statement, Hagel said he joined all the men and women of the U.S. Department of Defense in offering his deepest condolences to the family and friends of the soldiers killed in this week's appalling attacks on members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

"The United States strongly condemns today's shootings in Ottawa," the secretary added, "as well as the hit-and-run attack in Quebec earlier this week. The United States has no closer friend and ally than Canada, and the United States military has no closer partner than the Canadian Armed Forces."

Hagel said the Defense Department, "including through the North American Aerospace Defense Command, will continue to monitor the situation closely and stands ready to assist our Canadian allies in the aftermath of these tragic events."

The North American Aerospace Defense Command, based in Colorado and also known as NORAD, is a combined organization of the United States and Canada that provides aerospace warning, air sovereignty and defense for Northern America.

### **Vigilance is essential**

From the Oval Office, Obama said the attacks emphasize the degree to which nations must remain vigilant when it comes to dealing with acts of senseless violence or terrorism.

"I pledged, as always, to make sure that our national security teams are coordinating very closely, given not only that Canada is one of our closest allies in the world but they're our neighbors and our friends," Obama said.

When it comes to dealing with terrorist activity, the president added, Canada and the United States have to be entirely in sync.

Obama said he's traveled to the Canadian Parliament in Ottawa and recalled how warmly he was received; adding that during his call with Harper, the prime minister appreciated expressions of concern by the American people.

The attacks in Canada will have to be factored into ongoing efforts in the United States to counter terrorist attacks in this country, the president said.

"Every single day we have a whole lot of really smart, really dedicated, really hardworking people ... who are monitoring risks and making sure that we're doing everything we need to do to protect the American people," he said. "And they don't get a lot of fanfare; they don't get a lot of attention."

Many possible threats are foiled or disrupted that don't always get reported on, the president said.

"The work of our military, our intelligence teams, the Central Intelligence Agency, the intelligence community more broadly, our local law enforcement and state law enforcement officials who coordinate closely with us," Obama said, "we owe them all a great deal of thanks."

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## **2. Remarks at a Symposium on P5+1 Iran Nuclear Negotiations (10-23-2014)**

*Remarks by Wendy R. Sherman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs  
Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC*

UNDER SECRETARY SHERMAN: Good afternoon, everybody. You can tell how important this is to me to do it, because as Jim and John know, I just got off of a plane from Lima, Peru, so that's how important you all are that I'm here to do this, these remarks. I'm really delighted to be here and to see so many people that I know who are working so hard on one of the greatest challenges of our time.

As Dean Steinberg mentioned – I sort of like saying that, Dean Steinberg. That's sort of nice – Jim and I became acquainted more than a quarter century ago, first on the Mondale campaign and then on the Michael Dukakis for President campaign. Some would say that says a lot about our ability to create success. But that said, we got to know each other quite well. And for those of you who have not had the pleasure of working with Jim, I can tell you that he is incredibly smart, witty, warm – just ask his two daughters. And despite the fact that his brain has been picked regularly by presidents, national security advisers, secretaries of state, it remains chock full of wise thoughts, and Maxwell is very, very lucky to have you as dean. We are grateful to him and to the Maxwell School for bringing us together, just as I'm sure that the Maxwell School is grateful each day to have Jim Steinberg as its leader.

I also want to thank our host, Dr. John Hamre. He may have been following Jim Steinberg's tail lights, but I've been following his. John Hamre is really one of the wise men of this town, and I had the pleasure when I was in the private sector of sitting on the Defense Policy Board, where he ran a meeting of 25 formers and I was the low person on the totem pole – one of two women out of 25 I must say. But nonetheless, every former secretary of State, every former secretary of Defense, and all of us – all of us – followed John Hamre's lead. He is just an extraordinary public servant.

I want to congratulate CSIS on this spectacular new facility – just a slight upgrade from your previous digs. (Laughter.) CSIS is renowned for organizing conferences such as this, where men and women who make policy are able to dialogue with people who actually have time to think about policy, and that is a healthy and most necessary mix.

I thank, as well, our friends from the Carnegie Corporation and also Ambassador Kvale and representatives of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. In recent decades, Norway has played a truly unique part in some of the more uplifting moments in Middle East diplomacy. They're hard to find from time to time. So grateful for the role that Norway continues, for less than two weeks ago, Norway helped to organize the Gaza reconstruction conference in Cairo. America welcomes Norway's continued involvement in an arena where good ideas and common sense are as valuable as they are rare. So thank you very much.

Now, as I understand it, the major purpose of this extraordinary symposium is to analyze the nuclear negotiating strategy of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I'm strongly tempted to just remain silent and have you spell out that strategy for me, because the more I know about it the better. Of course, I could – and you probably wish that I would – seize the chance to speculate publicly myself about the motives and decision-making processes of the people who sit across from me and our team during our discussions. But, as will come as no surprise, that's probably an opportunity I will pass up. Since the nuclear talks have begun, I have suffered a twisted ankle, a broken nose, and a ruptured pinkie finger, made very famous on the front page of The New York Times. And I don't

intend this afternoon to invite dental surgery by having to eat my words, so I will be a little bit careful.

To be honest, several weeks ago, when I first received Dean Steinberg's invitation, I quite frankly was not sure whether this would be a good or a bad moment to speak openly about the negotiating process. And indeed, quite frankly, timing remains an issue. As you know, the talks involving Iran and the P5+1 – or as our European friends prefer, the E3+3 – have been extended through November 24th. And obviously, I don't and won't want to say anything today that would jeopardize our chance to bring those deliberations to a successful close. As Madeleine Albright once observed – a wonderful Secretary of State, a dear friend, and a business partner to boot at one point in my life – negotiations are like mushrooms, and often they do best in the dark. There are, however, many aspects of the topic that can be usefully explored and are fully in keeping with the focus of our gathering, which is blessed with an outstanding array of experts on relations between Iran and particularly the West.

To begin, I'd like to simply emphasize how important the P5+1 negotiations are. An Iran equipped with nuclear arms would add an unacceptable element of instability and danger to a part of the globe that already has a surplus of both. If Tehran had such a weapon, other countries in the region might well pursue the same goal, generating a potentially catastrophic arms race, intensifying the sectarian divide that is a major source of Middle East tension, and undermining the global nonproliferation regime that President Obama has consistently sought to reinforce.

That is why the President has pledged to ensure that Iran will not acquire a nuclear weapon. Our preference is to achieve this goal by diplomatic means. But make no mistake. Our bottom line is unambiguous, crystal clear, and, quite frankly, written in stone: Iran will not, shall not obtain a nuclear weapon.

A major step in the right direction of that pursuit was taken last January when we began implementing a negotiating framework called the Joint Plan of Action. In return for limited sanctions relief, Iran committed – while talks are underway – to freeze and even roll back key components of its nuclear activities. Specifically, Iran has halted the expansion of its overall enrichment capacity; put a cap on its stockpile of low-enriched uranium hexafluoride; stopped the production of uranium enriched to 20 percent; agreed not to make further advances at the Arak heavy water reactor; and opened the door to unprecedented daily access for international inspectors to the facilities at Natanz and Fordow.

At the time the Joint Plan was announced, many observers expressed profound doubt that Iran would abide by its commitments. But according to the IAEA – the International Atomic Energy Agency – Iran has done what it promised to do. The result is a nuclear program that is more constrained and transparent than it has been in many years. In turn, the P5+1 has fulfilled its commitment to provide limited sanctions relief. More extensive relief will come when – and only when – we are able to arrive at a comprehensive deal that addresses the concerns of the world community. Such a plan, if fully implemented, would give confidence that Iran's nuclear program will be exclusively peaceful and would enable the Iranian people to look forward to a much brighter future.

We are aware, of course, that this negotiating process is, shall we say, controversial. Some worry that it will fail. Others seem to fear that it will succeed. Many have questions and doubts. As our discussions have gone forward, the Obama Administration has consulted regularly with members of Congress and with our many overseas partners, including Israel and the Gulf states.

We have heard a variety of concerns and done our best to answer hard questions regarding the possible nature and implications of a potential deal, while reaffirming our enduring commitment to the security of the region. These conversations have been and continue to be quite valuable, and taken together, have reinforced our conviction that, although every alternative has risks, the decision to fully explore a diplomatic solution is the right one.

There does, however, remain much hard work to be done. As we approach the November 24th deadline, the valuable safeguards included in the Joint Plan of Action are still in place. Our goal now is to develop a durable and comprehensive arrangement that will effectively block all of Iran's potential paths to fissile material for a nuclear weapon. Such an arrangement would bar Iran from producing fuel for a weapon with either uranium or plutonium. Through inspections and monitoring, it would also offer the best method to prevent the covert processing of these materials and make any effort by Tehran to turn away from its obligations so visible and so time-consuming that the attempt would not succeed.

Given the stakes, it should be no surprise that our talks have moved forward at a deliberative pace, which is diplo-speak for "not so fast." Last week, my P5+1 colleagues and I were in Vienna yet again, or to be more precise, confined to a hotel that happens to be located in Vienna while subsisting on endless cups of coffee and a hotel buffet that specializes in turkey schnitzel.

The Iranian delegation is headed by Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif, while the chief negotiator for the P5+1 is the very capable High Representative of the European Union, Cathy Ashton. Both sides are assisted by teams of technical experts who help us understand the full range of our options. From the beginning, our talks have been serious and businesslike; they have also occurred in a variety of venues and formats. To date, we have met in Geneva and New York, as well as Vienna; we have had bilaterals, trilaterals, hexalaterals and plenaries; and we have devoted some sessions to broad principles and others to the very laborious task of defining specific technical parameters. We have also met at various levels: the specialist, the delegation heads, and sometimes – as in Europe this past week – Secretary Kerry takes the American chair.

It's no secret that among the P5+1 governments there exist some major differences on prominent issues in the world. But with respect to Iran's nuclear program, solidarity has been our watchword. We are all working towards the same goal. To that end, our group has proposed to Iran a number of ideas that are equitable, enforceable, and consistent with Tehran's expressed desire for a viable civilian nuclear program and that take into account that country's scientific knowhow and economic needs.

Iran's Supreme Leader has repeatedly said that his government has neither the aspiration nor the intention of building a nuclear weapon; indeed, he has said that such a project would be forbidden under Islam. So our proposals are consistent with Iran's own publicly-stated position. If Iran truly wants to resolve its differences with the international community and facilitate the lifting of economic sanctions, it will have no better chance than between now and November 24th. This is the time to finish the job.

Will that happen? I don't know. I can tell you that all the components of a plan that should be acceptable to both sides are on the table. We have made impressive progress on issues that originally seemed intractable. We have cleared up misunderstandings and held exhaustive discussions on every element of a possible text. However, like any complicated and technically complex diplomatic initiative, this is a puzzle with many interlocking pieces.



Because of this, it would be a mistake to focus inordinate attention on any one issue at the expense of all others. Every piece is critical whether it involves infrastructure, or stockpiles, or research, or types of equipment, or questions of timing or sequencing. But one area that has drawn much comment – in part because of Iran's own public statements – concerns the size and scope of the Islamic Republic's uranium enrichment capacity.

Iran's leaders would very much hope that the world would conclude that the status quo – at least on this pivotal subject – should be acceptable, but obviously, it is not. If it were, we would never have needed to begin this painstaking and difficult negotiation. The Security Council imposed sanctions on Iran for a reason, and that is because the government violated its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, engaged in secret nuclear-weapons-related activities, and was less than transparent in reporting to international agencies. That past has created a thick cloud of doubt that cannot be dissipated by Tehran's words and promises alone. The world will decide to suspend and then lift nuclear-related sanctions only if and when Iran takes convincing and verifiable steps to show that its nuclear program is and will remain entirely peaceful. That is a reasonable standard that Iran can readily meet. It is the standard that Iran must meet. And it is the key to ending Iran's international isolation.

The Obama Administration recognizes that in diplomacy, it is sometimes a good idea to widen the agenda so that a tradeoff on one issue can be balanced by flexibility on another. Given the turbulence roiling in the Middle East today, the temptation to link the nuclear question to other topics is understandable. However, all parties have agreed that this should be a single-track negotiation, with its own defined set of participants, its own logic, and a clear bottom line. We are concentrating on one job and one job only, and that is ensuring that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon.

I should note, however, in separate and dedicated meetings on the margins of each of our talks, I and members of my team raise our concerns regarding the status of U.S. citizens missing or detained in Iran. Nothing matters more to me as Under Secretary of State than ensuring the fair treatment of American citizens. Amir Hekmati, Saeed Abedini, Jason Rezaian should be allowed to return without delay to their families, and we must do all we can to find answers regarding the whereabouts and well-being of Robert Levinson and bring him home too.

Whether or not a nuclear deal is reached, the United States will continue to voice its longstanding concerns about Iranian policies that undermine regional stability or that are inconsistent with global norms and values. We will continue to hold Iran's Government accountable for all aspects of its human rights record and for actions that exacerbate sectarian divisions. As is the case with any country, engagement on one issue does not require and will not lead to silence on others.

In his Inaugural Address more than 50 years ago, President John Kennedy asked in the Cold War context whether a beachhead of cooperation might one day push back the jungle of suspicion separating East from West. Today, there are those in the United States who disbelieve almost everything Iranian leaders say, and there are many in Iran who question whether America will live up to whatever commitments we make. Clearly, there exists, if not a jungle, then at least a forest of distrust on both sides. Given what has happened in past decades, how could there not be? But I can affirm to you this afternoon that the United States will not accept any arrangement we can't verify, and that we won't make any promises we can't keep. Just as we will demand good faith, so will we demonstrate good faith.

Last fall, the President of the United States and the leaders of Iran decided to test the possibilities of direct negotiations on the nuclear issue. Both faced resistance and criticism for taking this bold step.

And yet, both still chose to accept the risks of diplomacy over the even greater uncertainties of other options. We do not yet know what the full consequences of this decision will be. But the world is clearly better off now than it would have been if the leaders on both sides had ignored this opening. With all that is going on in the Middle East today, an Iranian nuclear program that was not frozen but instead rushing full speed ahead toward larger stockpiles, more uranium enrichment capacity, the production of weapons-grade plutonium, and less transparency would hardly have been a stabilizing factor. Although our negotiating progress to date hasn't fulfilled our highest hopes, it has still exceeded the expectation of many observers.

Make no mistake. Developing a consensus on a comprehensive plan will require some extraordinarily difficult decisions and we should all appreciate that. This negotiation is the very opposite of easy. But the potential benefits are quite extraordinary. And it is vital that we understand that, as well. Because the acceptance and implementation of a comprehensive plan will improve prospects for people everywhere. It will reduce anxiety and enhance security throughout the Middle East. It will make possible an era of greater prosperity without any loss of dignity for the people of Iran. It will protect our allies and partners from a new and dangerous threat. It will lessen the incentive for a regional nuclear arms race and thereby strengthen the international nuclear proliferation regime. It will make our own citizens safer. And it will demonstrate yet again the potential for clear-eyed diplomacy to arrive at win-win solutions achievable in no other way. In sum, compared to any alternatives, diplomacy can provide a more sustained and durable resolution to the issues generated by Iran's nuclear activities.

Almost 800 years ago, the Persian poet Saadi advised listeners to "Have patience; all things are difficult before they become easy."

Despite the intense efforts of negotiators from seven countries and the European Union, we are still in that "difficult" stage. We must use the remaining time wisely and with a sense of urgency and purpose.

In closing, let me affirm that the United States and its partners are prepared to take advantage of this historic opportunity to resolve our concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program. We hope the leaders in Tehran will agree to the steps necessary to assure the world that this program will be exclusively peaceful and thereby end Iran's economic and diplomatic isolation and improve further the lives of their people. If that does not happen, the responsibility will be seen by all to rest with Iran.

We encourage Iran to make the right choice. Meanwhile, we remain steadfast in our determination to take the steps necessary to protect America's security and to improve the prospects for stability and peace across the globe. We hope Iran will make the right choice. We are ready to do so.

We thank you very much, and now I'd be pleased for a short period to respond to some questions. Thank you. (Applause.)

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### **3. Hagel, French Defense Minister Discuss Ebola, Counterterrorism Operations (10-23-2014)**

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23, 2014 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel called French Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian yesterday to discuss France's contributions to the fight against the spread of Ebola and their counterterrorism efforts in North Africa, Iraq and Syria, Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said in a statement issued yesterday.

Kirby's statement reads as follows:

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel spoke via telephone with the French Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian today. The two leaders spoke about the international response to Ebola in West Africa, counterterrorism operations in North Africa, and the coalition response to ISIL in Iraq and Syria.

Secretary Hagel welcomed the French commitment to expand its efforts to assist with the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

The two ministers talked about ways to improve information sharing in dealing with extremists in the Sahel and had an extended discussion on the coalition response to counter ISIL, where French and U.S. forces are working closely together -- in concert with other coalition partners -- to degrade ISIL's capabilities and effectiveness.

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

Related Sites:

[Special Report: Operation Inherent Resolve - Targeted Operations Against ISIL Terrorists](#)

[Special Report: DoD Helps Fight Ebola in West Africa - Operation United Assistance](#)

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#### **4. U.S. Envoy on OSCE Observers at Russian Checkpoints (10-22-2014)**

*By Deputy Political Counselor Jennifer Bosworth to the Special Permanent Council, Vienna*

Interpretative Statement on the Extension of the Deployment of OSCE Observers to Two Russian Checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian Border Pursuant to IV.I(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure

In connection with the adoption of the Decision for the Extension of Deployment of OSCE Observers to Two Russian Checkpoints on the Russian-Ukrainian Border, the United States would like to make the following interpretative statement under paragraph IV.1(A)6 of the OSCE Rules of Procedure:

The U.S. finds it deeply regrettable that the Russian Federation would not consider expanding the geographic scope of the observer mission, despite requests from other participating States. We further regret that Russia refused to agree to even a modest increase to the number of observers, as requested by the Chief Observer, to reduce the excessive workload faced by the observer mission's small working teams. We once again have to accept a limited-scope mission, covering just two border checkpoints—which account for approximately one kilometer of the 2,300 kilometer border. We are concerned that due to Russia's undue restrictions of its work, the mission will be unable to monitor the extent to which Russia is participating in or facilitating the flow of illegal arms, funding, and personnel to support the separatists in eastern Ukraine or provide any meaningful assurance that Russia is acting to stop that flow of support to those separatists.

We note that Step 4 of the September 5 Minsk Protocol delineates a clear role for the OSCE in monitoring and verification on both sides of the Ukrainian-Russian international border, and the creation of a security zone in the border areas of Russia and Ukraine. There are strong linkages



between ceasefire monitoring and border monitoring—and the OSCE approach to both of these activities must not be restricted by one participating State. The Russian Federation has prevented the expansion of this mandate to include other border checkpoints and monitoring between checkpoints, and, in so doing, Russia raises serious questions about its resolve to implement this critical element of the Minsk Protocol.

Therefore, we call upon the Permanent Council to remain seized of the matter and continue discussions with the aim of expanding the mission sufficiently to permit a true accounting of the situation on the Russian-Ukrainian border.

I request that this interpretative statement be attached to the decision and to the Journal of the Day.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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## **5. Ambassador Power at U.N. Security Council on Middle East (10-21-2014)**

*Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a Security Council Open Debate on the Middle East, October 21, 2014*

Thank you, Madam President. I'd also like to thank the Secretary-General for joining us today and for briefing us on his recent trip to the region.

We are living in a time of tremendous turmoil in the Middle East; a time that demands brave and decisive leadership by both regional leaders and the international community. Across the region, we see the need for hard choices. In Syria, the international community must summon the collective resolve to stop the Assad regime's monstrous atrocities, as well as the horrors of ISIL, and find a political solution to the conflict. In Lebanon and Iraq, political leaders must strengthen the institutions necessary to honor the aspirations of their people and to defeat violent extremist threats. And Israeli and Palestinian leaders must recognize that there is no alternative to a negotiated peace and invest the political will to build it. I will discuss each of these critical issues today, in turn.

We have seen how failures in leadership can help foster the conditions in which extremist groups thrive. By failing to make the hard choices necessary to address the grievances of its Sunni population, Iraq's former leaders helped to create conditions that ISIL exploited. The consequences have been horrifying. To cite just one example: earlier this month, ISIL announced strict rules on what can be taught in universities in Mosul, one of the cities it now controls. When Iraqi university professors rejected these restrictions and boycotted, ISIL declared that any professor who did not return to work would be executed.

More than three years ago, Bashar al-Assad lost legitimacy to lead when he responded to peaceful protests with brutal violence. Atrocities committed by his regime – atrocities of the kind and scale this world has rarely seen – played a key role in spurring the emergence of ISIL and other terrorist groups, and Assad's indiscriminate attacks on his own people continue to this day.

Last month, the OPCW released its second report, which found "compelling confirmation that a toxic chemical was used as a weapon, systematically and repeatedly," in three opposition-held villages in northern Syria. The OPCW concluded with confidence that chlorine was used. Witnesses described the attacks as being carried out by helicopters, which only the Assad regime possesses.

The consequences of Assad's actions have been staggering. More than 200,000 Syrians killed. Nearly 11 million Syrians in need of humanitarian assistance. And yet, despite the valiant efforts of international humanitarian groups, UN agencies, and others, the Assad regime is deliberately obstructing the delivery of crucial assistance to millions of people in dire need. The regime declares itself the antidote to the horrors of ISIL, but its chemical and barrel bomb attacks, its use of starvation as a tool of war, are every bit as indifferent to the fate of innocents and every bit as grotesque.

One community subjected to the Assad regime's merciless attacks has been Palestinians in the refugee camp of Yarmouk, which the regime has sealed since July 2013. The 18,000 residents who remain there have been relying on untreated groundwater and a single well for drinking water for nearly a month. Just yesterday, a spokesman for UNRWA issued a statement that began: "UNRWA was not cleared to distribute humanitarian assistance in Yarmouk today, 20th of October." The day before, UNRWA's statement began: "UNRWA was not cleared to distribute humanitarian assistance in Yarmouk today, 19 October." UNRWA notes that since July this year, there has been a steady and significant decline in the quantity of food and other essential items, such as medicine, that the Agency has been able to offer to the Palestinians in Yarmouk. That on any day – let alone so many days – the Assad regime is not allowing aid to flow to the Palestinians suffering in Yarmouk shows extreme cruelty. The international community must be more vocal in its condemnation of these unspeakable tactics. And when the Syrian government hails its leadership on behalf of the Palestinian people, they should be reminded by all of us of the people living in Yarmouk.

Three million Syrians have fled to neighboring countries to escape the regime's and extremist groups' violence – up to 80% of them women and children. The threat posed by ISIL is felt across the region, but especially in Iraq and Syria. And foreign fighters and Syrian nationals who have been recruited and trained to fight in ISIL and other terrorist groups pose a threat to countries far from the battlefield.

Among the countries most severely impacted are Iraq and Lebanon. For example, 180,000 Iraqis fled the city of Heet, in Anbar province, as it fell to ISIL in recent weeks. They are among an estimated 1.8 million Iraqis displaced just this year. Lebanon has taken in 1.2 million Syrian refugees – over a quarter of the country's population – placing immense pressure on its already strained resources.

We know what we must do: we must defeat ISIL and other terrorist groups. We must hold accountable all those in the Assad regime responsible for its widespread atrocities. And we must mitigate the suffering of the Syrian people. But we wholeheartedly agree with the Secretary-General that a political solution is absolutely essential to address the root causes of extremism in Syria, and to address the legitimate aspirations and grievances of its people. A political solution is not an enshrinement of the status quo. The majority of Syrians will not accept being ruled by a regime that has used sarin and chlorine to suppress its own people.

We commend the efforts of UN Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, who is working urgently to build support for a political solution by engaging multiple stakeholders. The Special Envoy met with Iran over the weekend and is meeting with Russia today – countries whose influence will be critical to reaching this long-sought solution.

Given the massive suffering that Syria's crisis is causing, and the threat it poses to our collective security, leaders in the region must be part of these efforts to forge a political solution. But regional leaders also must address problems closer to home, which impact the rights of their people and are a source of the suffering, disenfranchisement, and intolerance that feeds groups like ISIL.

Yet, some leaders still choose to put short-term interests ahead of the tough decisions needed to best serve their people. Others take divisive steps when they could instead build consensus. The international community stands ready to help address the region's challenges, but we need partners to exert the political will and courage to seek real solutions.

In Iraq, newly elected leaders must break from the sectarian style of leadership that defined the tenure of the Maliki government, and build institutions that represent the whole nation, rather than advancing one group's interest at the expense of another's.

In Lebanon, the position of president has been vacant for nearly five months, during a time when the country faces considerable security, economic, and humanitarian challenges. Lebanon's political leaders must come together urgently to select a president.

We have seen leaders within these countries willing to choose unity over division and to make great sacrifices for their people. In August, the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces fought bravely to defend the city of Aarsal from extremists. They served and died for their country – not for any one religious sect. In Iraq, Prime Minister Abadi is taking steps to form a more inclusive government, establishing the country's first complete cabinet since 2010. He is also moving toward decentralizing power and granting greater authority to provinces.

Real leadership is also required to advance Israeli-Palestinian peace. The most recent wave of violence was devastating, both in terms of its enormous human toll and because it was avoidable. Preventing another round of violence requires leaders who are willing to make difficult choices and commit to the hard work of negotiations.

We commend Egypt for helping broker a ceasefire agreement. The Gaza reconstruction conference raised \$5.4 billion and reaffirmed the international community's commitment to rebuilding the lives of Palestinians in Gaza who have suffered so much during and since the recent crisis. The United States is providing \$212 million in assistance to the Palestinian people for relief and reconstruction, atop the \$118 million announced in September.

Of course, as has been said, aid and assistance cannot produce peace in the Middle East – leadership and compromise are needed. For reconstruction not to be required again in the future, there must be a real change on the ground. Even the most durable of ceasefires is not a substitute for real security for Israel or for an independent state for the Palestinians.

This is only more difficult to achieve when both sides continue to take actions that may be politically popular with domestic constituencies, but that come at the expense of advancing the cause of peace. We continue to urge all parties to refrain from such actions, including unilateral steps at the United Nations, Israeli settlement activity, and provocations at the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif, where we urge all sides to respect the status quo of this holy site.

The United States remains fully committed to achieving a negotiated final-status agreement allowing two states to live side-by-side in peace and security. This is the only viable way forward, and if the parties are willing to go down this path – and are genuinely dedicated to the hard work of peace – we stand ready to support them.

Together, we can and we must support those taking the courageous steps to strengthen the Middle East in these immensely troubling times. The cause of peace in the region and the dignity of its people depend on it.

Thank you.

## **6. Airstrikes Help Ground Forces Take Fight to ISIL, Spokesman Says (10-21-2014)**

By Jim Garamone  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

FORT MEADE, Md., Oct. 21, 2014 – Kurdish forces are in control of the majority of the Syrian city of Kobani despite efforts by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant to take the town, Pentagon Press Secretary Navy Rear Adm. John Kirby said today.

Coalition airstrikes in and around the city on Syria's border with Turkey have been augmented by an airdrop of arms to Kurdish forces fighting the terror group. Air Force planes dropped 27 of 28 pallets to Kurdish Peshmerga fighters in Kobani, Kirby said at a Pentagon news conference.

"ISIL forces continue to threaten Kobani," Kirby said. "We're continuing to hit targets in and around there to help the Kurdish forces as they continue to fight against ISIL. So it's still a very mixed, contested environment."

### **Credit to Kurdish forces**

Kirby gave credit to the Kurdish forces that have fought ISIL to a standstill.

ISIL is presenting more targets to coalition aircraft and to Iraqi forces, Kirby said. Coalition forces launched seven airstrikes yesterday, and with the weather in the region improving, Kirby said he expects more attacks on the terror group in the coming days. With better weather, "intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance platforms are able to fly a little bit more now," he explained.

### **Iraqi forces make advances**

In Iraq, there have been strikes in support of forces on the ground in Fallujah, at the Mosul Dam complex and in Baiji. All three are areas ISIL wants to take and hold, and at all three locations, Iraqi security forces are contesting the group. Near Baiji – the location of a massive oil refinery -- Iraqi security forces are advancing.

"Their advances over the last few days have been slowed by the weather, which is clearing, and so they're moving again, but it also has been slowed by improvised explosive devices -- almost 30 IEDs that they found and cleared," Kirby said. "They are taking the fight to the enemy, and those strikes last night are indications that we're trying to support them, too."

Related Sites:

[ISIL's Actions Have Enabled More Airstrikes, DoD Spokesman Says](#)

[Special Report: Operation Inherent Resolve - Targeted Operations against ISIL Terrorists](#)

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## **7. Obama Activates Reserves for Operation United Assistance (10-17-2014)**

By Nick Simeone  
DoD News, Defense Media Activity

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17, 2014 – President Barack Obama has authorized the Defense Department to call up a small number of National Guard or reserve troops that possess special skills needed to aid efforts in stopping the spread of the deadly Ebola virus in West Africa.

Obama issued an executive order yesterday authorizing the secretaries of Defense and Homeland Security to order the Selected Reserve and certain members of the Individual Ready Reserve to deploy to West Africa, where as many as 4,000 U.S. troops are headed, most of them to Liberia, to support U.S. and international efforts to stop the rapidly spreading virus that has killed nearly 4,500 people.

U.S. officials say Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel requested the order after determining that specialists with skill sets needed by Operation United Assistance, including engineers, comptrollers and religious specialists, were in short supply, or to replace active-duty personnel.

Already, elements of the Kentucky Air National Guard are in Dakar, Senegal, to establish a staging base for the Liberia-based mission, having volunteered and deployed before the presidential order was issued.

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

Related Sites:

[Hagel Orders Expeditionary Ebola Support Team](#)

[Special Report: DOD Helps Fight Ebola in West Africa – Operation United Assistance](#)

[Executive Order: Ordering the Selected Reserve and Certain Individual Ready Reserve Members of the Armed Forces to Active Duty](#)

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